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THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

(Read at the Second Annual Meeting of the Association, New York,
December 28, 1918.)

I greet you with great pleasure at the end of our successful and prosperous first year as an Association. I welcome you to our Second Annual Meeting with a lively feeling of joy and satisfaction on seeing you here. As I look into your faces I see the light of comradeship and strong purpose that augurs exceedingly well for the future.

It was not without some trepidation, but at the same time with considerable confidence in the wisdom of our collective judgment, that we launched our bark a year ago upon waters tossed by the storms of a world war. Even in the quiet scholastic cove where our modest little ship took to the water, the surgings and cross currents of the dolorous times made themselves felt to an uncomfortable degree.

Could our little craft weather the storm? Could our crew sail her safely in the gale? The answer to these questions I read in your happy presence here today. We have survived. Our crew has increased. The log-book of our ship, *HISPANIA*, containing the record of our voyage, is an interesting narrative. We have safely anchored in port after our first annual voyage.

War times were indeed inauspicious times in which to undertake the organization of our society. The world cried out for sterner things in America than a society of Spanish teachers. The sterner things were given in abundant measure by our country. And be it said at this time that many members of our society, some in khaki here and in France, many in highly important Government missions, both public and secret, here and abroad, some in hospitals, canteens, cantonments, or ambulance corps, have taken an active part in the all-important and serious work of war, now so magnificently won by the forces of right and justice. I could name you a most worthy and long list of our members who have been conspicuous in war service. And among our members has been evident the highest degree of loyalty to the noble, unselfish ideals of the Government of our beloved land.

For the teachers of Spanish comprehend clearly that theirs is in essence a patriotic duty at all times. Besides offering themselves for participation in war service, they feel, I am sure, that in teaching Spanish well and effectively they are contributing much to the welfare of the country. They look into the future and see, as do all true American citizens, a greater United States of America. They have also the vision to see, I believe, a greater collective America, an America dedicated unitedly to the high ideals of freedom and democracy, an America stretching from our own land to the utmost bounds of Patagonia, Pan-America, a spiritual union of the English-, Spanish-, and Portuguese-speaking peoples of twenty independent republics. We look ahead and foresee a mutual understanding between all the Americas, a mutual appreciation of the work of each individual American nation and of the potentialities of each. This mutual understanding, already well begun, will grow and increase as never before. Suspicion that existed in Spanish America, of our nation, the most powerful in the group of New World peoples, has been, we believe, forever laid to rest by the disinterestedness and lofty sacrifice which that nation has shown in so unmistakable a manner in recent months.

But upon us generally as citizens of the most powerful nation in the New World, and upon us particularly as teachers of the language of eighteen of our sister American republics, lie peculiarly heavy burdens of responsibility. It is we who must do much to interpret to our fellow-citizens the intrinsic worth and soundness of Spanish-American civilization, the debt of the world to Spanish civilization in the history of the past and present, the progress and the possibilities of progress among those who speak Spanish. And the basis of all this work is the teaching of the Spanish language. How much friction and suspicion might have been avoided in the past between our country and Spanish-speaking lands had there existed among our citizenry an understanding of the Spanish language and the points of view of those nations that speak that language!

The attitude of superiority toward Spanish-American things and peoples so often assumed in the past by our business men, bankers, and even diplomats, is giving way to an attempt to understand those things and people. We need must teach our youth, our future citizens, that the life and customs of Spanish peoples are

different, it is true, but not, therefore, necessarily inferior to our own. All this may be done while we teach the Spanish language.

That Spanish honor, chivalry and bravery which have been a tradition through the centuries, have not been a mere tradition, is a thought that has been, by the process of comparison, rather forcibly impressed upon us recently. Remarks to this effect were heard a few weeks ago when that inglorious German fleet surrendered so ignominiously to the Allied navies. "Even poor old Cervera"—so ran these remarks of disgust—"sailed out of Santiago harbor with colors flying and guns in action, straight into what he knew was sure destruction, rather than to surrender without a struggle." Boasted German bravery, though supported by a fearful modern armada, becomes a laughing-stock in contrast with such deeds of heroic Spanish valor in the service of a forlorn hope. And Don Alfonso it was who chivalrously and insistently forced upon the German government recognition, which otherwise would have altogether perished, of the right of captives to life and proper treatment. The American and Spanish Ministers to Belgium it was who together made tremendous efforts to save the life of Edith Cavell.

Yes, Spanish traditions, Spanish literature, and the Spanish language have contributed and will contribute to the help of the world, to the benefit of Pan-America, to the good of our own United States. We cannot reject or demean them any more than we can reject or demean the traditions, literature and language of that other one of the two greatest republics of the world, France.

It behooves us, as teachers of Spanish particularly, to ever bear in mind that it is first of all for the good of our own land that we teach Spanish. And while we appreciate and teach Spanish traditions, literature and language, we do so to help our own citizens to a still higher place as leaders in the world; not as leaders in selfish commercial conquest, not primarily as leaders in financial operations, nor as leaders in military aggrandizement, but as leaders in the great fraternity of democracy, which exists in a more untrammeled state in the New World than in the Old. Here is our opportunity. Here is our work.

Our Association, humble in its beginnings, may and should continue to grow in usefulness to our country. To that end we seek new members. We seek the establishment of local chapters of the Association throughout the United States. Already plans are well

under way for chapters in northern California, in Indiana, in Kansas, and in Philadelphia. More will follow. I bespeak your coöperation in this work of organization.

Our Association can also render a service in providing for visiting Hispanists from other lands opportunities to speak before the American public. I believe the universities would gladly help us to arrange a series of lectures by these scholars when they come to our shores. I hope we may have discussion of this topic today.

The Pan-American Union, through its Section on Education, has, as you know, put successfully into practice, with the help of our universities, a plan for educating in this country students from Spanish America. Can we not do something in a work complementary to this? Possibly we can arrange with the help of business men to establish scholarships for our own young people in Spanish-American institutions, where they may go to prepare themselves for capable, intelligent participation in interamerican affairs, in commerce, diplomacy, finance. It ought to be feasible to obtain the backing of chambers of commerce and exporting houses to make possible this most desirable opportunity. Will not the great fleet of merchant vessels we are building be engaged to a great extent in the transportation to Spanish countries of the output of our expanded factories? Shall not our young men be prepared by actual residence and study in Spanish America for the tremendous commerce we shall carry on there? I hope you will discuss this suggestion today under the head of new business.

Finally, I ask your unstinted aid in furthering the work of our Association. We have much before us to do if we are to live up to our opportunities. Do not depend upon a few to do this work. The effectiveness and real service of a society are measured by the devotion of each individual member thereof. The agencies of our society are its committees, its officers, and its journal, *HISPANIA*. Be active in service when given committee work. Help your officers by suggestions, advice, and friendly criticisms. They invite and welcome them. Make still more useful our publication by contributions to its pages, and by practical employment of its very valuable bibliographies and its articles.

In a few hours we shall again weigh anchor and our bark will begin its cruise of another year, this time on waters brightened by the promise of peace in all the world. The year ahead is rich with

opportunity. All hands on deck! Labor there is in plenty. Let us steer our ship on a straight and determined course, regardless of whether the seas be rough or calm, and when next our ship drops anchor in port, may we find our crew more numerous, richer in the experience of service, in scholarship, and in intimacy of personal friendship. Os saludo y os deseo prosperidades mil en el Nuevo Año.

LAWRENCE A. WILKINS

NEW YORK CITY